



DEVIN LEMAHIEU

STATE SENATOR

Support for Right to Work Legislation

By Senator Devin LeMahieu

Last week the State Senate passed Right to Work legislation. Over the past few weeks I have heard from individuals across the district with their support or opposition to the Right to Work proposal. After careful consideration, I decided to support Right to Work in Wisconsin. Right to Work boils down to a fundamental principle: Employees should have the right to choose whether or not they want to join and support a union.

Under current law, individuals that refuse to join a private-sector union are still required to pay for the costs of representation, even if they do not agree with the mission or goals of the union. The Right to Work law gives employees the freedom to not join union or pay dues to a union as a condition of employment.

Right to Work does not make joining a union illegal. The Right to Work law will not eliminate private sector labor unions, void labor contracts, prohibit collective bargaining, or prohibit workers from organizing a union. It simply gives workers the ability to choose whether or not they want to financially support and be a part of a union. This legislation respects the individual worker's freedom of association. Allowing employees to choose will hold unions accountable to their members.

In addition to protecting workplace freedom, Right to Work status may also help job growth and economic development in Wisconsin. The government can't create jobs, it can only create a tax and regulatory climate that encourages job growth. We must cultivate a competitive business climate in areas such as taxes, education, regulations and infrastructure.

Right to Work status is another tool that that will make our state more attractive to job growth and expansion. Over the last ten years Right to Work states have added 3.6 million jobs while forced union states have added only 1.5 million. Right to Work states grew jobs by an average of 5.3%, while forced union states grew by 2.1%. Right to Work states grew wages by an average of 15.1%, while forced union states grew by 8.2%.

Right to Work will also make Wisconsin more competitive for economic development projects. The legislature heard testimony that 75% of businesses consider Right to Work an important or very important factor when deciding on where to expand or locate. Half of businesses would not even consider investing in a forced-union state.

To be sure, unions played an important role in the development of our modern economy. In Right to Work states across the country, unions continue to play an important role and even grow

their membership. Twenty-four states, including nearby Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan, have passed Right to Work laws and labor unions continue to operate in these states.

Since 2010, Right to Work states collectively increased union membership by 57,000 workers, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. During this same time, forced-union states actually lost 248,000 union members.

We must acknowledge the right of employees to personally decide whether or not they wish to support the union. And in so doing, we can continue to make Wisconsin a more attractive state for economic development and job growth.

It's time for Wisconsin to become the 25th state in the country that allows employees to choose whether or not they want to join and support the union.

Senator Devin LeMahieu represents the 9th Senate District, which includes parts of Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Calumet Counties.